

The Club has been recognized as one of the leading service clubs in Sussex County, New Jersey, as a result of its many community activities. Some of these activities including sponsoring high school Key Clubs, giving over \$98,000 in scholarships to high school seniors over the past twelve years, providing approximately \$35,000 per year in financial support for community groups and activities in Sparta Township, as well as community service projects ranging from flower planting and roadside cleanups to providing volunteer assistance to senior citizens and delivering food to the needy.

As the Kiwanis Club of Sparta continues its long tradition of dedicated service to the Sparta community, I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, to join me in commemorating the 50th anniversary of their organization. I sincerely wish that it may enjoy many more years of fellowship and service.

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

#### HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 27, 1998*

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today is a sad day for our democracy. This was the week that the House of Representatives was to debate and vote on campaign finance reform. Yet, here we are on Friday with the news from the leadership that a vote has been delayed. What is most upsetting is the reason for the delay, a majority of the House supports campaign reform.

The leadership, out of fear of actually doing something, first tried to push a bill that contained so many poison pill provisions that it was destined to fail. Now that this strategy appears doomed, the leadership simply pulled the bill and refuses to even consider a vote. The will of the majority in the House has now been denied, just as a majority in the Senate was denied passage of a reform bill.

The reason a majority of members support real reform is because they have heard from their constituents, just as I have, that the citizens are tired of the influence of big money in the political process and they want reform. If we fail to change the current system, we will continue to erode the confidence of the public in our democratic system.

I hope that next week brings, at last, the chance for this body to make a difference in our campaign finance system. The people of my district want action now!

#### HONORING THE MIDLAND VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

#### HON. RON KLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 27, 1998*

Mr. KLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Midland Volunteer Fire Department of Beaver County. The fire department was recently named to the Pennsylvania Fire Services Institute's 100 Year Honor Roll. This honor roll commemorates fire departments with more than a century of service. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the

volunteers, both past and present, for more than 100 years of public service to their community.

The Midland Volunteer Fire Department is made up of individuals who risk their lives in the service of their fellow citizens. The volunteers have other concerns in their lives including their careers and their families. However, when the emergency call sounds, the members of the Midland Volunteer Fire Department put their own lives on hold to provide safety and emergency services to the citizens of Midland. They provide an invaluable service to the entire community.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House of Representatives, I would like to wish the Midland Volunteer Fire Department many more years of successful public service. They have protected the lives of the families, the property, and the spirit of their community with honor and dignity. I ask you and all members to join me in a special salute to the Midland Volunteer Fire Department.

#### SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT'S STRONG SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS FREE- DOM

#### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 27, 1998*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 12, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held an important meeting with a number of the distinguished members of the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom. I had the great honor of chairing that meeting of the Caucus. The Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom was established last year by the Secretary of State to report to the Secretary and to the President on issues of religious persecution and appropriate United States government policy on religious liberty issues.

The Advisory Committee is composed of a number of distinguished religious, academic, human rights and foreign policy leaders. The Committee members have spent a great deal of time meeting and examining the relationship between religious freedom and American foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad presented its Interim Report to the Secretary of State and the President. Our hearing on Thursday focused on this significant report. In order to deal with serious, and in many places growing, pressure upon believers who wish to practice their religion in peace, the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad has met a number of times this past year and has prepared an excellent report on the problem of religious persecution. The report of the Advisory Committee includes a series of thoughtful and useful recommendations for United States policy to encourage and promote religious liberty.

I am delighted, Mr. Speaker, that Secretary Albright began immediately to implement the recommendations made by the Committee. At the time the Advisory Committee's Interim Report was made public, she announced that she was implementing the first recommendation of the Committee by designating a new

senior-level coordinator at the Department of State who will have responsibility for integrating concern for religious freedom into U.S. foreign policy and for developing a coordinated interagency strategy on this issue of great importance to the American people.

As Secretary Albright said when she met with journalists at the time the report was released,

America is a leader in promoting religious freedom because it serves our interests and because it is right. We hope to pursue that goal with even more vigor and effectiveness in the days ahead.

REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT ON THE INTERIM REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABROAD, WASHINGTON, D.C., JANUARY 23, 1998

Good afternoon. I wanted to come down here today to bring to your attention the very constructive and timely interim report I've just received from my advisory committee on religious freedom.

I very much welcome this report. Although I've just begun to study it, its overall direction and tone is very much in keeping with the Administration's own intentions and aspirations. So I'm pleased to tell you now what I told the committee just a little bit earlier, which is that I'm taking immediate action on the report's first and most important recommendation.

I will designate a new, senior-level coordinator within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to ensure that our efforts to advance religious freedom are integrated successfully into our broader foreign policy. The coordinator's responsibilities will include developing a strategy for appropriate overall implementation of the advisory committee's recommendation. This work will be done under the direction of Assistant Secretary John Shattuck, and in consultation with the White House, religious leaders, members of the advisory committee and of Congress.

In this way, we can assure the American people and the committee that its best ideas will be brought to life, not studied to death. I also assured the committee that I consider the promotion of religious freedom to be an integral component of US foreign policy to be pursued not in isolation, but as part of our efforts to increase the respect for human rights around the world.

That's why I've urged our diplomats to raise our concerns about religious freedom energetically; report on these issues thoroughly; and maintain contact with NGOs and local religious leaders on a regular basis. We will continue these and other efforts and give serious consideration to the committee's ideas on how we can do them better.

As we speak, the resilience and depth of the human desire to worship freely is on display in Cuba. Decades of repression could not vanquish the thirst for religious liberty on that island, just as it has not diminished the desire among the Cuban people for political liberty. The Cuban Government did the right thing in permitting His Holiness, the Pope, to accept the invitation of his church to visit.

Let us pray that the message of freedom and respect for the individual which he is conveying will influence the direction of government policies long after this historic visit is concluded so that Cuba, indeed, becomes more open to the world, and the world can, indeed, become more open to Cuba.

In closing, I want to thank publicly every member of the religious freedom advisory committee. This is a committee uniquely